

Form 10-300
(July 1969)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: District of Columbia	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
69-06-08-0010	6/4/69

1. NAME			
COMMON: Executive Office Building			
AND/OR HISTORIC: State, War, and Navy Building			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: S.E. corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street, N.W.			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington			
STATE District of Columbia	CODE 08	COUNTY:	CODE 001

3. CLASSIFICATION		CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC	
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	Public Acquisition:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	Yes:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted	
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process		<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress				
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)									
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments				
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)						
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious							
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific							

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: United States Government, General Services Administration			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		STATE: District of Columbia	
		CODE	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Recorder of Deeds			
STREET AND NUMBER: 6th and D Streets, N.W.			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		STATE: District of Columbia	
		CODE 08	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		STATE: District of Columbia	
		CODE	

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7. DESCRIPTION

(Check One)

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed

CONDITION

(Check One)

☐ Altered ☐ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved ☐ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The description and history of the State, War, and Navy Building have been abridged from a report prepared for the National Register by Nancy C. Taylor, National Capital Planning Commission, April 1969

Description:

The State, War, and Navy Building occupies most of the square bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, 17th Street, W. Executive Avenue, and State Place, N.W., west of the White House. Like the Greek Revival Treasury Building to the east in ground plan, the French Renaissance style State, War, and Navy Building is a monumental, isolated rectangle with a transecting wing and two interior courts. The building is approximately 520' long x 285' wide, stands about 134' above the sidewalk and is generally six stories high, with purple-grey Virginia granite walls and purple slate mansard roofs. Its colossal size and almost unbelievable variety and richness of detail represent the quintessence of vigorous superscaled late 19th-century architecture.

The property is surrounded by a granite wall and iron fence. Although close to the sidewalk on the east and west, the building is set back substantially from the street on the north and south behind a wide expanse of lawn. At the most used Pennsylvania Avenue entrance, the building is approached by a wide flight of granite steps leading down from the sidewalk to a flagstone court. Another set of monumental steps leads up again to the first floor.

A heavily rusticated subbasement and basement form a pedestal for three more stories with two additional stories behind the mansard roof. At the center of each facade is a six-story pavilion approached by a broad, high flight of steps which lead up to the first floor entrance prostyle with its paired and tripled sets of Doric columns. The columns support a classical entablature and a balustrade which forms the base for the second-story portico. On the third floor the portico has become a Doric colonnade and on the fourth floor directly below the mansard roof the colonnade is Ionic with an entablature and triangular pediment. The mansard roofs of the central pavilions, which rise above the side wings, are flanked by huge chimneys capped by overweighted chimney pots. Jutting out of the roof are several small ornate round-arched formers and one large central dormer with Ionic columns supporting a round-arched pediment. Crowning each of these central mansards is a segmental arched pediment decorated with ironwork sculpture designed by von Ezdorf.

The north and south central pavilions are flanked on either side by 6-bay, 5-story side wings. Most of the windows are 2/2-light double-hung with wooden sash. First floor windows have bracketed segmental hood-moulds. Second floor windows have bracketed triangular hood-moulds. Third floor windows have bracketed straight hood-moulds. The floors are separated by Doric friezes and by bands running along the window sills at the balcony level. Three fourth-floor windows jutting out of the mansard roof have overhanging straight cornices. Three smaller round-headed arched dormers

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SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1871-1888

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Abariginal

☐ Prehistoric☐ Historic☐ Agriculture☒ Architecture☐ Art☐ Cammerce☐ Communications☐ Conservation☐ Education☐ Engineering☐ Industry☐ Invention☐ Landscape☐ Architecture☐ Literature☒ Military☐ Music☒ Political☐ Religion/Phi-

losophy

☐ Science☐ Sculpture☐ Social/Human-

itarian

☐ Theater☐ Transportation☐ Urban Planning☐ Other (Specify)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The State, War, and Navy Building in Washington, D.C., now the Executive Office Building, was designed by Alfred B. Mullett and is his masterpiece. Begun in 1871 and completed in 1888 it is the most ambitious architectural undertaking of the Grant administrations. A long rectangle in plan, with two interior courtyards, this massive stone building has on each elevation a central section eight stories high, flanked by six story wings. Conceived on a monumental scale in the Second Empire version of the French Renaissance Revival style, it is dominated by a complex Mansard roof which rises above tier upon tier of hooded windows and monolithic classical columns and pilasters. Aggressively different from the more subdued government buildings in Washington, the State, War, and Navy Building has become a paradigm of post-civil war architecture and one of the three grandest structures in the United States in its style.

History:

The start of construction on the State, War, and Navy Building in 1871 marked the end of a 30-odd year controversy over the site and design of a new permanent home for the overcrowded State, War, and Navy Departments. During this period at least seven architects, among them Mills and Walter, had drawn plans for the proposed building, but it was not until 1871 that Hamilton Fish, Grant's Secretary of State, persuaded Congress to pass a bill which appropriated \$500,000 and specified that the ground plan and dimensions of the new building counterbalance Mills' recently completed Greek Revival Treasury Building to the east. Fish also persuaded the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, Alfred B. Mullett, to design the building in the French Renaissance style of his Post Office and Treasury Building in Boston.

The building was erected directly to the west of the White House on the Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street site of two existing Executive Office buildings, Old War and Old Navy; and the wing-by-wing construction allowed those buildings to remain in use during part of the 17-year construction period. The South Wing which State was to occupy was started on June 21, 1871, and completed for occupancy by December 1875. The East Wing (Navy) was begun in 1872 and completed in 1879. The North Wing (War), started in 1879 (after demolition of Old War), was completed in 1882. The West and Center Wings were begun in 1884 (after demolition of Old Navy)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Executive Office Building, General Services Administration, Historical Study No. 3, Public Buildings Service, December 1964. This book contains a complete bibliography of the Executive Office Building.

Records, Bureau of the Budget Library.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38° 53' 55"	77° 02' 22"		38° 53' 51"	77° 02' 21"	
NE	38° 53' 55"	77° 02' 18"				
SE	38° 53' 47"	77° 02' 18"				
SW	38° 53' 47"	77° 02' 22"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: W. Brown Morton III, Architect, Historic Sites Survey		DATE May 24, 1971
ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service		
STREET AND NUMBER: 801 19th Street, N.W.		
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE District of Columbia	CODE

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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Executive Office Building

7. Description (1)

project out of the very top of the mansard. The windows of the 3-bay end pavilions of the north and south facades are flanked by engaged columns, while the corners are articulated by engaged pilasters. Above the third floor entablature is a triangular pediment surmounted by a large dormer like that of the central pavilion.

While similar in design to the north and south fronts, the longer east and west facades have additional 2-bay side pavilions flanking the central one. Side wings are 10-bay rather than 6, and the 5-bay end pavilions have a portico on the first floor and a colonnade on the second. These end pavilions also serve as entrances on the basement level.

The interior of the building originally had over 1-3/4 miles of corridors, 553 rooms, and about 10 acres of floor space. The interior decoration, much of which can be credited to Richard von Ezdorf, is in the style of Austro-Venetian palaces. Of particular interest are the gas light chandeliers, door knobs for the individual departments, carved mantels, and the skylights and domes over the great stairways. Perhaps the most notable elements are the great spiraling stairways, one at each corner and double ones at the center of the east and west wings. The floating effect of these stairways, which sweep in graceful curves from floor to floor, was achieved by embedding the treads and risers in the arch of the stairway wall and by notching each riser over the tread below.

The most elaborately decorated rooms in the building were the three department libraries. The most luxuriant of these, the Navy Library, now called the Indian Treaty Room, is embellished with marble panels, fluted pilasters, an elaborate ironwork balcony, tiled floors, and sculptured lighting fixtures.

The State, War, and Navy was probably the first Federal building to have an elevator designed for it before construction. It also had a central hot water heating and plumbing system which was modern for the period. The 6,000 gas jets which originally lit the building were extinguished for the last time in 1913. Although the Executive Office Building has been modernized to a limited degree over the years, the important elements of its interior design remain largely unchanged.

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Executive Office Building

8. Significance (1)

and completed in 1888. By March 1, 1888, after an expenditure of \$10,038,482.42 the new State War and Navy Building was fully occupied.

Mullett quit as Supervising Architect in 1875 and was later to commit suicide in 1890 after losing a suit against the Government for architectural fees for the building. He was succeeded for short periods by William A. Potter and Orville Babcock and then in 1877 by Col. Thomas Lincoln Casey, an Army engineer and master builder, who with his chief designer Richard von Ezdorf, an impoverished Austro-Venetian aristocrat, completed the building 11 years later, faithful to Mullett's exterior design and exceeding his lavishness in the interiors.

In 1882 the corridor partitions between the completed wings were removed and Congress reassigned the building space. State lost 40% of its original South Wing and only regained it when the Navy Department moved out in 1918. The year 1882 also saw the birth of the Office of the Superintendent of the State, War, and Navy Building created solely to furnish building services to its occupants. This office was the embryo of the General Services Administration, which now provides similar services to Federal Offices throughout the country. Among the Superintendents were Capt. U.S. Grant III (1909-13) and Capt. Douglas MacArthur (May to November 1913).

Between 1917 and 1932 the exterior of the building was in almost constant danger of being reshaped into a Greek Revival counterpart of the Treasury Building. Only last minute protests and the deepening depression saved the building from Waddy B. Wood's classical redesign. As late as 1961, the building was threatened with demolition, but it is now scheduled for restoration and modernization as part of the plan to preserve the historic buildings on and around Lafayette Square.

Space does not permit even a capsule summary of the historic events and decisions associated with the State, War, and Navy Building. Among a myriad of distinguished occupants were President Hoover, who had his offices in the building from December 26, 1929-April 12, 1930; four future Presidents: Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; William Howard Taft, Secretary of State; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; and Lyndon B. Johnson, Vice President. Also headquartered in the building were thirteen Secretaries of the Navy from Richard W. Thompson (1877-81) to Josephus Daniels (1913-21); twenty-one Secretaries of War from George W. McCrary (1877-79) to Harry H. Woodring (1936-1940) and including Robert T. Lincoln. Elihu Root, William H. Taft, and Henry L. Stimson. When the War Department moved to new quarters, the State Department and the Bureau of the Budget remained as the principal occupants. Twenty-five Secretaries of State had offices in the building from Hamilton Fish (1869-77) to George C. Marshall (1947-49) and including James G. Blaine, John Hay,

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8. Significance (2)

Executive Office Building

Elihu Root, Henry L. Stimson, and Cordell Hull. Since the establishment of the Bureau of the Budget in 1939, thirteen of its directors have been headquartered in this building. It is now principally occupied by part of the Bureau of the Budget and the ever-expanding White House staff.

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S. E. District of Columbia	
COUNTY -----	
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State, War, and Navy Building
Second Floor Plan, 1948

